United Nations A/57/114

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 June 2002
English
Original: Arabic/English/Spanish

Fifty-seventh session
Item 67 (g) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Missiles

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Replies received from Member States	2
	Guatemala	2
	Israel	2
	Japan	3
	Lebanon	4
	Qatar	4

* A/57/50/Rev.1.

02-44359 (E) 230702

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 56/24 B of 29 November 2001, entitled "Missiles", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of all Member States on the issue of missiles in all its aspects and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

2. By a note verbale dated 15 February 2002, all Member States were invited to communicate their views on the issue. To date, five Member States have replied. Their responses are reproduced in section II below. Any replies received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Member States

Guatemala

[Original: Spanish]
[5 June 2002]

Resolutions 56/24 B, 56/24 S and 56/21 are of benefit and importance to a world in search of peace, security and freedom from the scourge of war, by avoiding the danger of a nuclear war, pending agreement by nuclear-weapon States to submit their facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). To this end, the issue of a reasonable balance of forces must be handled in such a way as to permit all States of the world to have an acceptable limit of offensive capability.

Israel

[Original: English]
[30 May 2002]

General comments

1. In recent years the level of ballistic missile exports to the Middle East has risen dramatically, creating a major threat to our national security. Various bilateral efforts were important in slowing down some of the flow of missile transfers, but ultimately, these transfers continue. External supply has dramatically enhanced the menace posed by the presence and the development of ballistic missiles capable of carrying conventional and non-conventional warheads that threaten Israel and regional stability as a whole.

2. Certain countries have not indicated any willingness to curb such programmes and all the factors point to an ongoing determination to expand and improve the range and capability of these missiles. We have seen no effective restraints on the transfer of whole missiles, sub-systems, components, training and ballistic missile expertise to our region in recent years.

3. In addition, we have observed a trend whereby countries of concern in the region that have acquired ballistic missiles and their related technology are now in the process of providing missile assistance to other countries in the region, complementing the assistance those countries already obtain from other external suppliers.

4. Israel has spared no effort in highlighting the current disturbing trends of ballistic missile exports to countries of concern in the Middle East in its relevant diplomatic exchanges and dialogues in recent years.

5. As a country that suffered a number of ballistic missile attacks against civilian population centres during the Gulf war, Israel believes that any international effort on the missile issue should strive to enhance regional security and contribute to a stronger sense of national security, especially of States subject to threats by others.

6. In this regard, high priority should be accorded to the effort to reduce and mitigate the considerable ballistic missile threat to our region by preventing exports of ballistic missiles, their components and related technology, to and between the relevant States.

7. Bearing in mind this growing threat of ballistic missile attacks, the development of missile defence systems by threatened States is justifiable and should be regarded as a natural expression of the right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, it is critical that the international community contend with the complex reality of ballistic missile proliferation in regions like the Middle East and prevent the continuation of such exports.

Practical measures

8. Israel supports, in principle, any genuine initiative designed to effectively prevent ballistic missile proliferation, particularly in the Middle East,

where this problem has intensified in recent years. One of our central concerns remains the manner in which the international community can narrow existing and expanding missile threats through the strengthening of export controls in the missile area.

9. Israel has been an adherent to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) for the past decade, complies with its provisions faithfully and fully supports the aims and objectives of the regime. In seeking to enhance cooperation in this field, we should ensure that new international initiatives do not weaken the export restraints contained in the MTCR.

10. Confidence-building measures could be useful in the missile context. Their objective is to enhance the sense of security of States and reduce threats and tensions. Bearing in mind the varying circumstances in different regions, we believe that the building of confidence must primarily begin at the regional level. A realistic approach would be to identify agreed-upon measures by the parties in a given region that could contribute to the stability and security of all States.

11. Transparency is often proposed as a confidence-building measure, but its application must take into account particular regional circumstances. In order to build confidence, any transparency measure must be considered in the light of its impact on regional stability. While transparency can be a positive measure, it cannot be considered the exclusive means to build confidence.

12. Other potential steps or confidence-building measures on a regional level in this regard could be:

(a) The use of basic policy dialogues between regional parties to try and defuse tensions, mutual suspicions and distrust connected to missile proliferation;

(b) Regional workshops that could encourage a wider and more comprehensive regional dialogue on security matters and the development of regional confidence-building measures in the missile area;

(c) Refraining from transferring missiles and related technology to other (regional) States and non-State entities, including terrorist organizations.

13. In attempting to establish a list of agreed-upon regional confidence-building measures, other measures of restraint can and should be adopted. One such measure is the implementation of effective export controls by each State that would limit the export of ballistic missiles and their related technologies. Israel believes that such export control regulations should be harmonized with the MTCR provisions.

14. Different initiatives on missiles that have been introduced in recent years include elements regarding cooperation between countries for the peaceful use of space. As a space-faring nation, Israel would be willing to contribute to and participate in cooperative activities in this field. Any cooperative measure, however, must be carefully considered, controlled and monitored in order to prevent diversion to missile programmes. In any event, cooperation should not become a reward for proliferation.

Japan

[Original: English]
[15 April 2002]

1. Missiles are an extremely effective means of delivery for weapons of mass destruction. Ballistic missiles, in particular, are characterized by short flight time, high speed and the extreme difficulty of establishing an effective defence against them. When weapons of mass destruction are coupled with missiles, they become a real threat to international peace and security.

2. Weapons of mass destruction are prohibited under the existing multilateral agreements, with the exception of nuclear weapons in the hands of nuclear-weapon States. However, weapons of mass destruction have in fact proliferated, and the risk of further proliferation cannot be excluded, as shown in past cases of non-compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

3. In the past decade, an increasing number of countries have come to possess missiles, in particular ballistic missiles, despite — or perhaps due to — the demise of the cold war.

4. It is under these circumstances that the issue of missiles, especially that of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, has become imminent and gained ever greater attention in the deliberations of the international community. In Japan's view, therefore, the most urgent aspect relating to missiles is their proliferation, both in the global and in the regional context. In the discussion of the United

Nations panel of experts, this aspect should be given the highest priority.

5. Based on the above observations, Japan considers that the following points should be incorporated into the final report of the United Nations panel of experts:

(a) The fact that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is taking place in tandem with the proliferation of ballistic missiles is the major cause of concern for the maintenance of international peace and security. Therefore the efforts to prevent and curb the proliferation of ballistic missiles should be a matter of high priority in the deliberations of the panel;

(b) The issue of choice of forum is of secondary importance compared to the substance of the missile issues themselves. The efforts undertaken on various tracks, including that for the International Code of Conduct, should be viewed as complementary and reinforcing, and not as exclusive, to the panel discussions; in other words, the efforts to tackle the issue of missiles should be multilayered;

(c) Confidence-building measures on missiles should take into consideration the specific security requirements in each region. Confidence-building measures may work under certain conditions, but it should be noted that in some cases the application of confidence-building measures of some kind could have adverse implications for regional security situations. Thus, it should be carefully examined whether a specific measure contributes to enhancing regional and global security or not;

(d) Space Launch Vehicle technologies are inherently similar to those of ballistic missiles. Therefore, countries claiming to be engaging in Space Launch Vehicle activities should be in full compliance with the existing treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction as well as space-related conventions. They should furthermore be responsible for ensuring that their space activities are not used to conceal ballistic missile programmes. Effective transparency measures and verification mechanisms in this context may be worth considering;

(e) The role of export controls should not be underestimated as a practical tool to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. More countries should join these endeavours by establishing effective national export controls and other measures to this end.

Lebanon

[Original: English]
[11 April 2002]

The Government of Lebanon cannot provide comments on the issue of missiles since it does not possess this type of military equipment.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[9 May 2002]

1. The resolution includes a request to the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the issue of missiles in all its aspects because there is a need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles, in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, that can contribute to the achievement of international peace and security.

2. The matter raised is a major, ramified and complex one in view of the fact that it addresses the issue of missiles in all its aspects, and especially when the security concerns of Member States at the international and regional levels and countering the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are taken into consideration. We are therefore of the view that it is difficult to identify the missiles that should be studied in all their aspects in view of the variety of their types and the varying character of the operations in which they are used.

3. The study should include a statement of the technical specifications of missiles and their various types (conventional, unguided missiles; and short-range, medium-range, ballistic and anti-missile guided missiles). It should also cover the question of whether such missiles can carry warheads of substances of mass destruction (chemical, biological or radiological) or conventional warheads.

4. So as to make it possible to elaborate a comprehensive concept of the request to the Secretary-General, we propose that a meeting of governmental experts from Member States, specialists in the munitions and missiles field, should be held under the auspices of the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat in order to identify the types of missiles that might constitute a threat to international peace and security, especially those whose warheads can carry weapons of mass destruction, and

that they should be presented to Member States for comment before they are included in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session under the item entitled "Missiles".